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ARE YOUR TEACHERS AIDS OR HINDRANCES TO SCHOOL PROGRESS?

(By the Teachers and Professional Service Division of the Employment
Bureau of the United States Department of Labor.)

Wherever we go we hear the cry "Better Schools." Our legislatures have passed numerous laws, and our state departments of education have promulgated various regulations toward the improvement of our schools. The Federal Bureau of Education has contributed much in this direction. To any reasoning mind it must be apparent that "better schools" means primarily "better teachers." The National Education Association, in a resolution passed at the 1916 session (July, New York City), stated:

"The National Education Association calls the attention of the American people to the fact that teaching is a profession, demanding for its successful practice a technical training that will put the teacher in possession of professional standards; that these professional standards can be maintained only by the employment of superintendents, supervisors and teachers who have unquestioned professional qualifications for their work; that members of the teaching profession can have but one client, the public."

While our legislatures have enacted laws specifying the qualifications required in teachers, only in a few instances has provision been made for supplying these teachers. The result is that school officers are frequently at a loss to know where they shall secure the teachers with which to fill the vacancies occurring, and hence persons not properly qualified are frequently selected. Local politics are also a prominent factor in many instances. The following table, showing the degree of preparation on the part of teachers in various states, will prove of interest:

State.	Total Teacher.	Graduates of				Attended (Not Graduated).		
		Common School Only.	High School Only.	Normal School Only.	College or University.	H. S. 1-3 Years.	Normal School.	College or University.
Illinois (1914)	30,565	1,596	9,688	4,193	4,073	2,988	5,875	2,251
" (h. s.)	2,808		103	359	1,980	13	83	354
Kansas (rural)	7,721	1,231	4,791	225		1,474		
" (grades)	5,202	471	2,556	747	328		659	440
" (h. s.)	2,476	55	174	651	1,352			244
Kentucky (rural)	10,381	7,640					2,741*	
" (city)	2,071	1,172				371	192	336
Oregon	6,173	180	1,122	737	564	618	340	475
Wisconsin :								
Rural	6,630	118	3,062	2,245	30	581	791	38
State graded	1,665	16	368	504	31	66	318	35
Grade below h. s.	1,220		370	685	33	17	222	26
Rural h. s.	1,106		7	388†	487		59‡	139§
City elementary	4,047		185	2,910	149	79	345	186
City h. s.	1,349			135	885	21	19	78

The above table reveals the deplorable condition that in the five states mentioned, of 80,606 teachers, 12,479 have no further preparation than that gained in the common schools; that 3,480 are holding positions as grade teachers (not rural) who have no preparation above high school, and that 533 have attended but have not graduated from high school; that 55 high-school teachers have no higher preparation than that gained in the common schools, 34 have attended but have not graduated from high school, and 284 have graduated from no school above high school; that 1,533 high-school teachers have graduated from no school above the normal school, and 161 have attended but not graduated from normal school, a total of 18,559 teachers lacking adequate preparation for the positions they hold. In other words, of the total number of teachers in these states, 23 per cent. are not qualified for their work, and 15.5 per cent. have attended no school above the common school. Surely this is not as it should be. We are sending our children to the schools hoping that there they may gain a substantial foundation for

* Includes graduates.

† Includes 42 who have not attended high school and 42 attended but not graduates of high school.

‡ Includes 5 not graduates of high school.

§ Includes 93 normal-school graduates.

|| Includes 15 who have not attended high school.

true citizenship and the necessary instruction to prepare them for their work in life. The teachers should, therefore, be the best the money available can procure.

To aid in this, to help school officers in locating competent teachers for their vacancies, the United States government has created, as a part of its employment service, the Teachers and Professional Service Division. The methods used in this division are most thorough, and when the government bureau recommends a teacher for a specific position, its judgment may be relied upon, for no teacher is recommended unless the bureau is fully assured of the candidate's unquestioned fitness for the position. Its standard of scholarship, while high, is not unreasonable:

Rural School Teachers—graduates of normal training high schools or better.

Graded School Teachers—graduates of recognized normal schools providing two or more years above high schools.

High School Teachers—graduates of recognized colleges or universities. The course of study should include at least sixteen hours of education.

The bureau has found its greatest obstacle to success in the salaries offered in some districts, where a minimum salary is offered and a maximum of scholarship is required. In the experience of the bureau it is impossible to find qualified teachers below the following salaries:

Rural Schools—\$40 a month for inexperienced teachers.

\$50 to \$65 a month for experienced teachers,
depending on experience.

Graded Schools—\$65 a month for inexperienced teachers.

\$70 to \$85 a month for experienced teachers,
depending on experience.

High Schools—\$65 to \$75 a month for inexperienced female teachers.

\$70 to \$80 a month for inexperienced male teachers.

\$80 to \$95 a month for experienced female teachers, depending on experience.

\$85 to \$100 a month for experienced male teachers, depending on experience.

The above are offered as *minimum* salaries. It must be understood, however, that higher salaries mean better teachers. A good teacher will not accept a low salary, and any teacher of experience who accepts a salary less than those shown in the above schedule should be looked upon with suspicion. The observations of the bureau disclose abundant reason for such suspicion, and school officers will do well to bear this in mind when contending for low salaries.

Another difficulty, not so widespread as the foregoing, is the seeming inability of some graduates to properly estimate the value of their services. In some instances new college graduates have specified \$100 a month as a minimum salary. While it is never the policy of the bureau to recommend a decrease in the salaries offered, it is sometimes unable to place beginners because they have placed their minimum salary too high. A beginner should remember that his or her chief consideration must be effecting an entry into the profession. After once entering upon the profession, salary should increase at the rate of \$5 a month for each of the first four years. Further increases can only be had by locating in larger systems.

In conclusion allow me to say that it is the earnest desire of the Teachers and Professional Service Division to aid school officers and teachers to the fullest extent possible. We must, however, have the hearty co-operation of both—of the former in reporting vacancies and referring teachers for registration, and the latter in registering and keeping the office informed of all changes in location and availability, and responding promptly when an effort is made to place them in a position. The service is free to all. All communications should be addressed: Teachers and Professional Service Division, U. S. Employment Service, 845 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.